

10/4/69

Dear Gary (copy to Paul H),

You never told me whether Dave sent you a copy of his "study" of the Zapruder camera, in which he used Nix's instead, and in which he claimed Barrett had simply confused ASA numbers with camera speed. He gave it wide circulation a year after WWII came out, including to the New York Times, where it had the intended purpose of diminishing the interest they had developed in my work - and the attention they had been giving it as news.

My points were that the FBI and Commission had reason to believe there was something serious wrong, with a 30% error in the time of the reconstruction, and that variation in camera speed, never really checked anyway, could account for it. You will recall what I showed you about the special mechanism controlling this camera (then unknown to me). When Barrett reported Z had his camera set for 24 fps, further investigation was required, for this exactly accounted for the error.

If you will recall from the documents I print in PW, it was because of my work that the government, with undignified haste and in such panic everyone signed blank receipts and then they didn't trust the mails, got the camera back from Bell & Howell. It was not available at the Archives until after PW came out. My long search for a similar model did not come to fruition until very long after that.

Without making any effort to learn the characteristics of the Z camera, Dave willed his conjecture of confusion between ASA and speed numbers into fact and proceeded with another part of his campaign against me.

The men who called Z taped it to be certain he made no mistake. Z confirms that the purpose of Barrett's visit to his office was to learn exactly what I took from his report, camera speed. Whether he was right or wrong is not the point. My quotation was both fair and accurate, and it now turns out was in keeping with the purpose of the report.

I am not asking you to confront Dave with this. It may, perhaps, be best to leave bad things as they are. However, I do suggest that the enclosed copy of my letter to Dave is a direct challenge to his integrity, for this statement by Z entirely destroys the fiction he created for the sole purpose of slandering me. If he does not retract, I think it will be a fair representation of his intentions to begin with.

However, if you think you should tell him I sent you a copy of my letter and any opinions you may have about what he should or should not do, I am also in accord with that. He has done enormous harm with this vile campaign, and I think it would not hurt if at some point, when everything he has said has been proven false and not one could be interpreted as having constructive purpose, if he were asked to face the reality of what he has done.

I am sending this to no one except Paul, with the understanding that if he deems it worthwhile, he will communicate it to Mel and Jim. I am not interested in a campaign against Dave, but I am interested in those he has reached having an evaluation of what he has been sending them- and of him and his motives and dependability - his "scholarship", if you please.

Sincerely,